UNE 6, 2006 SERVING TERRE HAUTE AND THE WABASH VALLEY 50¢ NEWSSTAND

# 'A real leader'

## MANY PAUSE TO REFLECT ON FORMER MAYOR PETE CHALOS' IMPACT ON TERRE HAUTE AND ITS RESIDENTS

Tribune-Star file/Bob Poynter

**Experience in attendance:** Four-term Terre Haute Mayor Pete Chalos listens to the moderator during an April 1, 2003, candidates forum inside the Senior Citizens Center. Chalos received an ovation from the large group in attendance. Chalos died Sunday at the age of 78.

Photo courtesy of the Chalos family

Friends: Pete Chalos poses with Gary Hart, a U.S. senator and twice a presidential candidate in the 1980s.

BY SUE LOUGHLIN ❑ TRIBUNE-STAR

Joe Anderson remembers Pete Chalos as someone who brought honesty and integrity to Terre Haute city government.

R. Brad Lawson admires him as a great high school basketball coach.

And Charles Clark credits the former mayor with assistance in getting three new elementary schools built in Terre Haute during the 1980s.

Chalos, who died Sunday at age 78, left a legacy not just in politics and government, but in education and coaching as well.

Anderson, long involved in Vigo County Democratic politics, recalls that when Chalos became mayor, he abolished the practice of making all city patronage employees pay 2 percent of their paychecks to the Democratic Party.

Chalos also changed the city's bidding practices to obtain the best contracts for the least money, Anderson said.

▶ Turn to LEADER, A4

**INSIDE**

■ Former mayor provided leadership when community needed it the most. A8

*"Pete had no equal. Pete fought for working people to the last day of his last term. 'Pete was tough. He only showed hurt and pain when citizens were losing jobs to outsourcing."*

*– Joe Anderson, who has long been involved in Democratic politics*

**Menards eyes second store**

# Leader: 'Truly the friend of the working people'

▶ Continued from A1

The four-term Terre Haute mayor made unprecedented changes in party politics and set a new standard by demanding honesty and ethics in government, Anderson said.

In terms of attracting industry and jobs, "Pete had no equal," Anderson wrote in a 2005 letter. "Pete fought for working people to the last day of his last term. Pete was tough. He only showed hurt and pain when citizens were losing jobs to outsourcing."

R. Brad Lawson remembers him in a different way; he played basketball for Chalos at the former Prairie Creek High School.

"He was an excellent coach," Lawson said. "He had a short temper sometimes and was very insistent on playing the game certain ways, but we had very good teams for a small high school back then."

Chalos took Lawson to an Indiana State University basketball tournament and introduced him to the Central Missouri State coach; Chalos later took him and another student to the Missouri college, where both successfully tried out for basketball scholarships.

"He drove his car and took us out there at his own expense," Lawson said. "Pete was a first-class person and he really had a major influence on me."

Chalos persuaded Lawson to run for a seat on the Vigo County School Board in the mid-1970s, and Lawson won.

With Chalos' passing, "We've lost a real leader," said Lawson, 69. "There are not enough good things I can say about Pete Chalos."

Charles Clark, former Vigo County School Corp. superintendent, said Chalos made several contributions to education as a teacher, central office administrator and later as mayor.

Photo from the 1945 Wileyan yearbook

**Red Streak:** Pete Chalos, former mayor of Terre Haute, had many years ahead of him in his 1945 Wileyan yearbook senior photo.

While employed in the school district's central office, "He was the person in charge of implementing Title IX in Vigo County when it was first passed by Congress," Clark said. The 1972 Title IX law requires schools that receive federal money to provide equal opportunities for men and women in sports.

When Chalos became mayor, he worked with the school district to help overcome some challenges in getting three older elementary schools replaced at their existing sites: Farrington Grove (formerly Fairbanks), Davis Park and Sugar Grove.

Clark was interim superintendent at the time, which was 1984. The state had criteria related to minimum enrollment and acreage, and the school district had difficulty meeting the criteria.

Chalos worked with city departments, neighborhoods and the state, helping pave the way for construction of new buildings at existing sites, Clark said.

The mayor was a major supporter of a student exchange program with Tajimi, Japan, and, "He was never too busy to attend a school function. If you asked Pete to be there, he'd be there," Clark said.

Bob Wright, former Vigo County Democratic chairman, described Chalos as "truly the friend of the working people. He was always looking out for things in the community that would help or hurt the working man or woman."

Tribune-Star file/Bob Poynter

**A Pete repeat:** Former Mayor Pete Chalos swears into office for a fourth term Jan. 1, 1992, with his family at his side in the Terre Haute city courtroom.

Tribune-Star file/Jim Avelis

**1995:** Mayor Pete Chalos delivers his State of the City address Jan. 18, 1995.

**Pre-consolidation:** Pete Chalos formerly served as the coach of the Gerstmeyer boys basketball junior varsity. Chalos (left, second row) is seen in a yearbook photo with the 1970-71 team.

The former mayor had an unending interest in politics. "He knew probably more about the politics of Vigo County than anybody I have ever known," Wright said. "He made it a habit of knowing everything he could about anybody who might be involved in politics, good or bad."

Chalos could be tough on those who opposed him, Wright recalled.

"He would not be someone you would want to offend unless you had a very good basis for it," Wright said. "He remembered who was for him and who was against him."

Wright did not support Chalos during his last bid for mayor, but the two remained friends and they last spoke two weeks ago, Wright said.

U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh, D-Ind., described Chalos as a great mayor and good friend. "He was honest, candid and devoted to the best interest of Terre Haute. His legacy is a better city, and I will miss him," Bayh said in a statement.

At Black Angus, former Mayor Jim Jenkins – who beat Chalos in the 1995 election – paid tribute to his predecessor on a restaurant marquee that read: "RIP Mayor Pete."

Jenkins said Chalos "was a very tough, cagey politician. I say that with all due respect. I believe politics is a good, honorable profession and he was very good in that profession."

He appreciated Chalos' candor. "He dealt with issues in a very straightforward fashion. You always knew where you stood," Jenkins said.

Even when Jenkins was Terre Haute mayor, "I always called him 'Mayor,' and he always called me 'Sheriff,'" said Jenkins, a former Vigo County sheriff.

Chalos met U.S. presidents, world leaders and entertainers. He played a major role in bringing presidential candidates Gary Hart and Michael Dukakis to Terre Haute for rallies. He was instrumental in bringing Digital Audio Disc Corp. to Terre Haute.

Yet for all his accomplishments, his greatest source of joy and pride was his family. His three children, Jim, Kathy and John, remember him as a great father, best friend and their hero. Jim and Kathy have followed in his footsteps and have entered public service – Jim serves on the City Council and Kathy Chalos Miller is running for County Council.

"He was so proud to see [Kathy] win the primary," Jim Chalos said Monday.

For all Pete Chalos' toughness, his former administrative assistant, Jan Chait, remembers the softer side of the family man.

Whenever a family member left his presence, he always made sure to say, "I love you," Chait remembered.

He told Chait, "You never know what's going to happen, and I want that to be the last thing they hear from me."

Chalos' visitation is 4 to 8 tonight and 9 to 11 a.m. Wednesday in Cross Tabernacle Church. Services are 11 a.m. Wednesday in the church.

*Sue Loughlin can be reached at (812) 231-4235 or sue.loughlin@tribstar.com.*

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ans of Foreign Wars. Visitation is 4 to 8 p.m. today, with a Masonic service at 7 p.m.

## Pete Chalos

Pete Chalos, 78, of Terre Haute died at 4:39 p.m. Sunday, June 4, 2006, in Union Hospital.

CHALOS

He was born June 25, 1927, in Vigo County to John Chalos and Katherine Katrissiosis Chalos. He was a teacher, a basketball coach and school administrator for 30 years in several Wabash Valley schools, before running for Terre Haute City Council, a position he held from 1972 until 1980. He was mayor of Terre Haute from 1980 to 1996. Following his terms as mayor, Chalos joined the staff of Ivy Tech Community College as a consultant and recruiter until 2002. He wrote a regular editorial column for the Tribune-Star and published four books: "Growing Up in Terre Haute"; "Just a Thought"; "Mayor"; and "Speak Out."

Survivors include his wife, Ulla Chalos; two sons, Jim Chalos and his wife Tina, and John Chalos; one daughter, Kathy Miller and her husband Jack; six grandchildren, Adams Chalos, Aron Chalos, Austin Chalos, Alexis Chalos, Sydney Miller and Zachary Miller. He was preceded in death by his parents; two sisters, Catherine Hoole and Mary Chalos; two brothers, Eli Chalos and Paul Chalos; two sons; and one daughter.

He was a Navy veteran of World War II, serving on the U.S.S. Winslow.

Services are 11 a.m Wednesday in Cross Tabernacle Church, with the Rev. Keith Taylor officiating. Burial is in Roselawn Memorial Park, with military honors conducted by Krietenstein Post 104 American Legion. Visitation is 4 to 8 p.m. today and 9 a.m. until services Wednesday, both in the church. Mattox-Ryan Funeral Home assisted with arrangements.

## Gordon Cole

Gordon Cole, 82, of Terre Haute died at 9:50 a.m. Sunday

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